



Candidate Profile

Executive Director / Chief Operating Officer
Westchester Country Club
Rye, NY 10580
<https://www.wccclub.org>



Organization

History

John McEntee Bowman
Founder, Westchester Country Club

A self-made man from Toronto, John McEntee Bowman came to New York when he was seventeen. He began his career as a groom in a stable and worked his way up to eventually own the Biltmore hotel group, one of the most exclusive and largest hotel chains in the world at that time.

Mr. Bowman sought to create the sportsman's paradise within easy reach from the bustle of Manhattan. He would go on to purchase land in both Harrison and Rye, New York for his flagship hotel project, the Westchester Biltmore.

Mr. Bowman had a vision:

Members would live in the hotel and in homes on the grounds. The Club staff would take care of all services, both in the hotel and in the homes. Meals would be delivered to the homes from the hotel kitchen. Maids and gardeners would be called in from the hotel to attend to all the Members' needs. A large garage with a platoon of mechanics would service the cars of the Members. And maybe, there would even be an airfield to handle the Members' planes in the coming age of flight.

As for sporting facilities, the Club would offer the finest in golf, tennis, polo, horseback riding, swimming, boating, squash, tobogganing, skating, shooting, skiing...everything. It was going to be the most beautiful, most luxurious hotel-club-community anywhere. And, of course, no expense was to be spared.

Originally, 583 acres of land were purchased from Hobart J. Park, at \$2,500 an acre. Two months later a 62-acre tract was bought on Manursing Island, valued at \$375,000. The following month 35 acres were purchased from the old Hill Estate on Parks Farm. In the summer of 1919 construction of the eight-story hotel at the top of the hill was begun, under New York architects Warren and Wetmore in the style of a nineteenth-century Italian villa. Landscape architects were Charles W. Leavitt & Sons. Billington and Smith-Mertz were contracted to build the polo field and five miles of roads.

Walter J. Travis, the great Australian and American golf champion turned golf architect laid out the two 18-hole golf courses. The courses were built by the Philadelphia-based architectural firm Toomey and Flynn who built the modern course at Shinnecock Hills toward the end of the same decade. The Club joined the USGA on Jan. 13, 1922, four months before the courses opened for play.

On May 15, 1922, John McEntee Bowman formally opened the Westchester-Biltmore Country Club. Almost 1,500 members joined, paying an initiation fee of \$25. Gage I. Tarbell was named President and E.D. Miller Secretary-Treasurer.

The Beach Club opening took place two weeks later when the large casino with a fine dance floor and handsome furnishings were unveiled. Facilities included eight hundred bathhouses, tennis and handball

courts, a large saltwater pool, a seven-acre, man-made lagoon for swimming and canoeing, and parking for seven hundred cars.

The total cost exceeded \$6,000,000, but the facilities were unequalled anywhere in the world. In addition to 45 holes of golf and the aforementioned facilities at the Beach, there was a brokerage office in the clubhouse, three polo fields (now the driving range); he constructed a separate short game area near the par-3 course, a bridle path, a track for horse racing, and fifteen tennis courts, including five superb grass courts.

The Club has hosted many memorable events over its history. The Thunderbird Classic came to Westchester in 1963, with Arnold Palmer and Jack Nicklaus winning two of the first three years. The Thunderbird continued annually until 1967 when it became the Westchester Classic.

Ben Hogan played his final competitive round at the Classic on July 5, 1970. The event morphed again and was re-named the Westchester Buick Classic and later, The Barclays. These events were considered “tune-ups” for the U.S. Open with hard, fast greens, tight fairways, and high rough. But members and pros alike enjoy the course for its beautiful landscaping, premier conditioning, and perpetual challenge.

The PGA returned to Westchester Country Club in August 2011 with the final Senior Major of the year, the Senior Players Championship, as well as in 2015 for the KPMG Women's PGA Championship. In 2021, the Club hosted the U.S. Women's Amateur.

An important part of John Bowman's vision of the Westchester Biltmore was the 62-acre Beach Club on Manursing Island in Rye, N.Y. On June 10, 1922, the Beach Club grand opening gala opened to a 25-piece orchestra playing for a formal fashion show. At its inception, Beach Club facilities included a one million gallon saltwater pool, 1,000 feet of beach on Long Island Sound, eight hundred bathhouses, tennis and handball courts, a seven-acre, man-made lagoon for swimming/canoeing, and parking for seven hundred cars.

During the summer season today, the Beach Club is open seven days a week until 10 or 11 pm from early June through Labor Day. The Beach Club opens informally every season on Memorial Day and hosts an opening party in early June. The Fourth of July weekend is the busiest weekend of the year at the Beach Club when over 2,000 Members and Guests are in attendance to socialize, dine and view the fireworks show. Other popular Beach Club events include the Luau party in July and the Clambake in August, all featuring live entertainment.

Perhaps the most notable feature at the Beach Club is the Club's aquatics area. This facility boasts a secured area and a large wading pool for small children and their families. The Main Pool was the largest pool in Westchester County when built and is rumored to still hold the record today. At a capacity of roughly one million gallons, the saltwater main pool receives its water directly from Long Island Sound. It also features diving and a 2-story slide.

Today, the Westchester Country Club is an exclusive family-oriented ranked 25th of 4,000 private Clubs in the United States and maintains its status as a "Platinum Club."

Club members enjoy world-class facilities including the two championship Golf Courses, a Beach Club on Long Island sound, and comprehensive Tennis and Squash facilities amongst other specialized amenities.

The main eight-story clubhouse features approximately 55 member apartments and 70 luxury suites and guest rooms. There are three dining rooms, two large banquet rooms, conference facilities, outdoor terrace dining, and two golf course snack bars open during the season. The Sports House is a separate member facility connected to the main clubhouse. In this area, members enjoy three dining areas featuring Contemporary Club and Global Cuisine. The Golf Shop, member locker rooms, Barber Shop, pool, and fitness facility are also located in this building.

Pertinent Westchester Country Club Data

Westchester Country Club has one of the largest operating budgets for a member-owned club in the northeast exceeding \$44 million. Dues income contributes to over \$15 million with annual food and beverage revenues exceeding \$12 million.

There are over 1,600 members in various categories. The membership is extremely passionate about the Club and its success. It is truly a second, and first home, to many members.

Full-time staff in season exceeds over 700 with over 250 in the off-season.

Initiation fees for a regular member are \$150,000. The average age of members is approximately 58 years of age and trending lower.

There are close to 50,000 rounds of golf played annually on the Club's two courses and 9-hole executive course.

Executive Search Consultant and Principal Manny Gugliuzza will share confidential additional information with seriously qualified candidates. This is a truly unique opportunity to manage a one-of-a-kind property.

Please click below for a short video.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vRgkBGCUN04>

Position Overview

The successful Executive Director at the Westchester Country Club will need to be a visible, hands-on, and accessible leader to both the members and staff alike. The Executive Director / Chief Operating Officer will guide all Club operations with a focus on delivering an exceptional member experience in support of the priorities established by the Club's Board of Directors and Committees. The Executive Director will act as the leader, mentor, and liaison between all department managers and committees. He or she will be held accountable for all areas of the Club. The Club seeks an experienced, strong, well-rounded leader with particular experience in member relations, strong food and beverage management, financial management, a specialist in creating memorable member experiences, and the ability to work well within an active committee structure.

This position requires a high degree of grace, visibility, and a strong eye for personalized service, which are critical for all team members to emulate. The Executive Director should sincerely engage with every generation of family members and their guests. The role of the Executive Director / COO at the Westchester Country Club requires a strong embrace of community values and enjoyment of the highly desirable community of Rye, NY.

The Executive Director/COO duties include but are not limited to:

- Development and execution of all standards and operating policies, which will be the foundation of a true service culture. The Club believes that great service is in paying attention to the small details.
- Sets the standard for effective management, maintaining a high level of ethics, prudence, creativity, productivity, and demonstrating a concern for the supervision and development of the staff.
- Ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships with all staff.
- Work with chairs of member committees to ensure that activities are coordinated across the entire Club.
- Ability to collaborate with the Board to develop and execute a unified vision that will engage the membership in vibrant programming.
- Must be able to follow instructions, respond to management direction, and solicit feedback to improve performance. Must be detail-oriented, able to prioritize, multi-task, plan work activities, and use time effectively.
- Initiating directly and through department managers the emphasis of a "member-first" service culture that ensures, tradition, member patronage and maximizes the use of the Club's facilities.
- Administration and oversight of the financial reporting for all Club operations that follows acceptable accounting policies, procedures, and internal controls. Such duties will involve the formulation of the Club's annual operating and capital budgets to be coordinated with the Club Treasurer and Executive Committee.
- Active promotion and positive representation of the Club to the community, reciprocal network, and all members and their families.
- Visibility, accessibility, and interaction with members daily, actively soliciting member opinions and input as to the Club's facilities and services. He or she will report significant issues to the President.
- The development and execution of capital planning and projects consistent with the long-range strategic plan.

Attributes and Responsibilities

- An outgoing and friendly personality with a high potential to identify with and embrace the Club's unique

culture.

- Leadership skills with the ability to motivate a veteran staff with a commitment to quality and excellence.
- Highly energetic; a self-starter with a “hands-on” approach to management.
- Excellent communication skills at all levels.
- A strong sense of service with proven staff development and training skills.
- The ability to function in a committee-oriented environment; to respond to the ideas and energies of the Club’s Standing Committees. The ability to deal with a variety of personalities.
- The Executive Director is expected to set the pace for all employees and to actively promote a positive and safe work environment where teamwork and cooperation are emphasized.
- The active promotion of the Club to all members and their families. The Executive Director is expected to interact with members daily; actively soliciting members’ opinions and input as to the Club’s facilities and service.

Requirements

- Bachelors Degree in Hotel/Restaurant Management, Business, or a related field and Hospitality experience that provides the required skills and knowledge.
- Ten-year minimum experience as General Manager/COO in a similar position at a club or within hospitality-based Hotel/Resort or high-end operation. Working with an active Board of Directors and within a committee structure is helpful.
- Must possess a strong business acumen and strong planning operational and financial skills in operating one of the largest, complex multi-faceted country clubs in the northeast with nearly 700 staff in season and an operating budget of over \$40 million.
- A Certified Club Manager (CCM), Master Club Manager (MCM), and a Certified Chief Executive (CCE) are considered a plus.
- Prior experience in managing and coordinating extensive capital improvements required.
- A strong history of verifiable high-end quality food and beverage management is required as well as strong training programs and culture for excellence for high service standards
- A career path marked with stability and professional achievement.
- A person of exceptional character; motivated, energetic, friendly, and dedicated to the profession.
- A friendly and outgoing personality with strong communication skills and high visibility. A true motivator that successfully leads the staff to attain a high level of exceptional member experiences.
- The professional will be a lifelong learner continuing research and understanding industry trends. The individual shall be obsessed with high levels of detail and continual improvement in all facets of the daily operation.
- Excellent verbal and written skills. Ability to author monthly correspondence and written communication to the membership.
- The ability to operate a computer to enter, retrieve or modify data utilizing Microsoft Word, Excel, Outlook, PowerPoint, email, ADP, internet, and other software programs at a high level of proficiency.
- Impeccable and verifiable references. All candidates will be subject to a thorough background check.

Competitive Compensation & Benefits

- Competitive compensation/salary and an excellent annual performance bonus and benefits package commensurate with qualifications and experience.
- Medical, Dental, Life Insurance, and Paid Vacation.
- Participation in the Club’s 401(k) plan with club match.
- Professional dues and CMAA expenses along with other exceptional professional benefits.
- Relocation assistance/ Housing allowance.

To be considered for this outstanding once-in-a-lifetime opportunity all cover letters and resumes should be received as quickly as possible.

Professionals who meet or exceed the established criteria are encouraged to send a compelling cover letter addressed to the Search Committee outlining their qualifications, experience, interests, and why the Westchester Country Club and Westchester County will be beneficial for you, your family, and your career

along with their resume to:

GSI Executive Search
Manny Gugliuzza, CCM, CCE
Principal and Search Consultant
mannyg@gsiexecutivesearch.com
732-618-8665

This position is available immediately.

